



CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

July 23, 2019

The Honorable Mick Mulvaney
Director
Office of Management and Budget
725 17th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20503

The Honorable "R. D." James
Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works
Department of the Army
108 Army Pentagon
Washington, DC 20310

Lieutenant General Todd Semonite
Chief of Engineers and Commanding General
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
441 G Street NW
Washington, DC 20314

Dear Director Mulvaney, Assistant Secretary James, and Lt. General Semonite:

I write to express my strong support for the selection of the levee project near the historic town of Princeville, North Carolina for full upfront funding utilizing the funds provided by Congress in the Supplemental Appropriations for Disaster Relief Act (P.L. 116-20).

Princeville is the first municipality in the United States incorporated by former slaves following the end of the Civil War. In the closing days of the Civil War, emancipated slaves sought refuge in an area near the Tar River known as Freedom Hill. A community of free African Americans began to form there and in 1885, the Town of Princeville was incorporated as the first of its kind in America. Today, Princeville continues to exist in its historic location on the banks of the Tar River and its population remains over ninety-five percent African American, many of whom trace their lineage back to the first freed slaves to inhabit Princeville. Action by the USACE is needed to preserve and protect this historic town for current and future generations.

Since its creation in 1885, Princeville has suffered major flooding events. In 1967, the Corps completed a levee to address the frequent and severe flooding in Princeville, but in 1999, the town was completely devastated by the flood waters from Hurricane Floyd that circumvented and topped the levee. Most recently, in October 2016, Hurricane Matthew again brought flood waters from the Tar River that bested the levee and submerged eighty percent of the town.

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Following Hurricane Floyd, President Clinton in 2000 issued Executive Order 13146, beginning the process to expand and improve upon the Princeville levee and make other flood control measures to protect the historic town from future flooding disasters. Unfortunately, these improvements had yet to be accomplished in 2016 when flood waters from Hurricane Matthew again devastated Princeville. In the aftermath of Hurricane Matthew, town and county officials, in concert with the Governor's office, have made strategic decisions to secure the future of Princeville. The completion of the USACE levee project is a critical component in those preparations to ensure Princeville's long-term viability.

The Princeville project was authorized by Congress in the Water Improvements for the Nation Act of 2016 (P.L. 114-322). In the recently passed Supplemental Appropriations for Disaster Relief Act (P.L. 116-20), Congress provided \$740 million for the construction of flood and storm damage reduction projects. I feel the Princeville levee project is deserving of the funding needed to complete the levee project in order to mitigate the risk of future flooding and to preserve the historical significance of Princeville. I respectfully request you utilize the funds provided by Congress to fully fund the project.

The urgent need for the Princeville levee project cannot be overstated. Residents of Princeville must be protected from future flooding and the town must be protected for its historical significance to our nation. I humbly request your assistance in preserving this historic town by selecting the Princeville levee project for full upfront funding using the resources provided by Congress in the Supplemental Appropriations for Disaster Relief Act (P.L. 116-20).

Thank you for your consideration of our request.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "G. K. Butterfield", with a stylized flourish at the end.

G. K. Butterfield
Member of Congress